

Film Appreciation
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Lecture - 18
City in Cinema

Good morning. So, today's topic is City Cinema particularly in the Indian cinema context and I will be focusing on majorly on Hindi films, but also select films from other languages also my particularly and specific interest in post liberalization, city cinema from India.

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Now, as we know every major world city has a distinct culture and different directors have captured unique aspect of that culture in the films, the city culture is embodied in a city's language it is social believes, it is the kind of people who walk the street, the flanners its food, its clothes, the mass media popular culture, youth culture of a particular cities. So, these are the factors that constitute a city. What is a city after all, if not its language, its culture, its food , its people.

City cinema captures the iconography, the iconology of these films and it represents what the city is through an interplay of oral visual science and thus translates surveillance scapes into cultural spaces. And now for example, in Woody Allen's Manhattan, the cities presented as a romanticized glimmering cosmopolitan world, if Woody Allen's New York is people with those interested in Bob Dylan, Tennessee William and Guggenheim

museum the cinema or New York of Martin Scorsese thrives on often representing its under belly the main streets. So, we have to understand how different filmmakers capture, different facets, and different faces of a city.

In cinema of the metropolis in India streets of city culture is reflected through you know through extreme Dharavi in Mumbai to Anna Salai area of Chennai and from Lodi Gardens of Delhi to College Street of Calcutta, where cinema portrays the turbulence and energy, the attitude of people there desires and possibilities inter personal relationships and facets of urban angst. Now, I think a film like Raj Kapoor's *Shree 420* ...I am supposed to talk to you about post liberalization cinema, but here is a connect there is going to be some kind of relationship between *Shree 420* which starts with a route sign that *Bombay 420*, you know it is a very literal telling of what city is you know *420* is a very Indian slang which means someone who is you know kind of a manipulator, a kind of cheat.

So, *Bombay 420* everyone who inhabits the city space has got to be a city person is colloquially speaking a *420* person, a fraud in other words. So, as Raju played by Raj Kapoor he heads towards his city of dreams, he sees this road sign *Bombay 420*. And now a well meaning character later on advises Raju that this is *Bombay* and truth comes dime a dozen, but there are *420* ways of making money by deceit.

Now, from this point I would flash forward to the ninety post liberalization, post liberalize period when you get to see movie like *Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman* starring Shah Rukh Khan where a street performer played by Nana Patekar once, another Shah Rukh is also Raju in this film and what does he tell him that wait till you learn what *Bombay* really is as you know, you do not know what *Bombay* is? the idea is that again for a naive well meaning, where you know wide, aid, innocent like yourself *Bombay* is no place, you have you do not really know what *Bombay* is in order to make it begin *Bombay*, in other words you have to be corrupt, a fraud.

Now, what is being discussed here is the essence or the spirit of Mumbai. Now, at one place it is also can be seen as a place that welcomes fast and discards faster.

Now, I will like to draw your attention to F W Murnau *Sunrise* which is also played on these binary about the city and the rural, where everything good is represented city represents everything that is evil and the small town or the rural represents everything that is good, so the binaries. So, there is a femme fatale in Murnau's *Sunrise* and there is

a good sacrificing wife in the rural place. So, this is what we have been generally told things are although changing now.

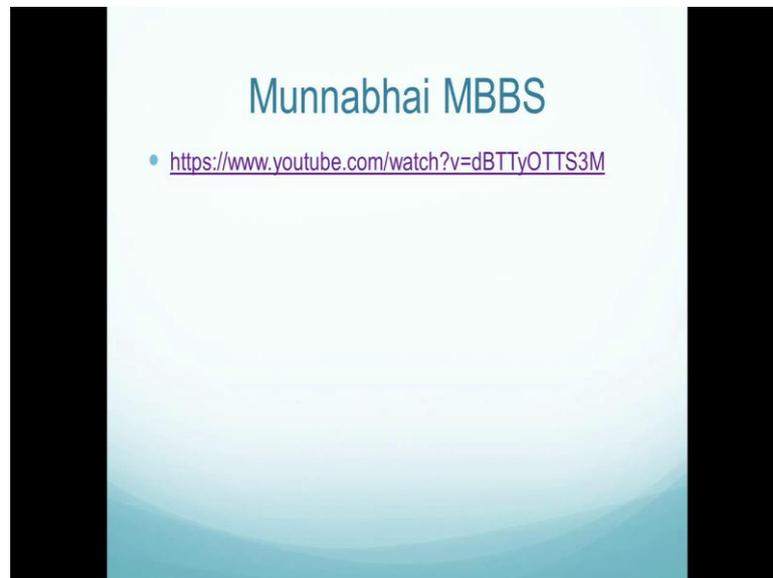
So, it has been it is known that the real sites of Bombay are the streets themselves. We generally talk about the great streets of Bombay. So, there is film called Life in Metro 2007 Anurag Basu movie, which is the contemporary take on Mumbai and portrait the sounds and silences of Mumbai along with the much talked about multicultural ethos and plurality of the city. Now, Amits attempts suicide and disappointments and tears and heart breaks and anguish and corporate life ...tussle between corporate life and family life, life in a metro is probably of film that includes all most every element of Mumbai and although it touches upon the negative is aspects of modern life in a city it also ends on a hope full note and with a token of promises tone of promises is there.

Now, Mumbai is a summation that is bigger than it is people, but the film tries to tell us that greatness stems from it is people. Popular genre of cinema Mumbai usually traces the life of an outsider an innocent who quests for lively hood or truth of an would of an end in a tragedy as in Deewar, as in Nayakan or Parinitha in Hathyar also Agneepath and Ram Gopal Varma's a trilogy of organize crime Satya, Company and Sarkar. The parallel cinema of Mumbai on the other hand is a mark of realism as well as on the world of the urban poor and the lower middle class there is quailed life and fantasies as seen in your nice Salaam Bombay or more recently in Danny Boyle, slumdog millionaire these films are conspicuous for depiction of this star contrast between the everyday life's of the protagonist and the dreams of a better life.

So, what I am trying to say is that the right from the cinema of maestro such as Bimal Roy and Guru Dutt's to Raj Kapoor and Satyajit Ray streets have been, city has been, a significant space of random encounters, violent crimes, urban surveillance and ambiguous morality and sexuality I would urge you to watch Satyajith Rays Mahanagar in this connection and city cinema of an represents the emerging social space and public sphere of modern organism a city and it is language are joined at the seams . street and dialect of Bombay or Mumbai popularly known as the Bombay a language perhaps is the best known of cinematic language from India, this dialect was first heard and appreciated for it is authenticity in Guru Dutt's Aarpaar the variety of the variety and composite of Konkani and Marathi and Hindi and English. This Soon became a staple of several films with Mumbai as a backdrop, gangster film such as Agneepath and Satya and Company also Sarkar, Shootout at Lokhandwala... they have made use of this peculiar brand of

language. Now, at this point I would like to draw your attention to clipping from Munnabhai MBBS, please watch this particular scene and then will talk about you will understand what I am trying to tell you. So, I am sure you enjoyed that particular scene,

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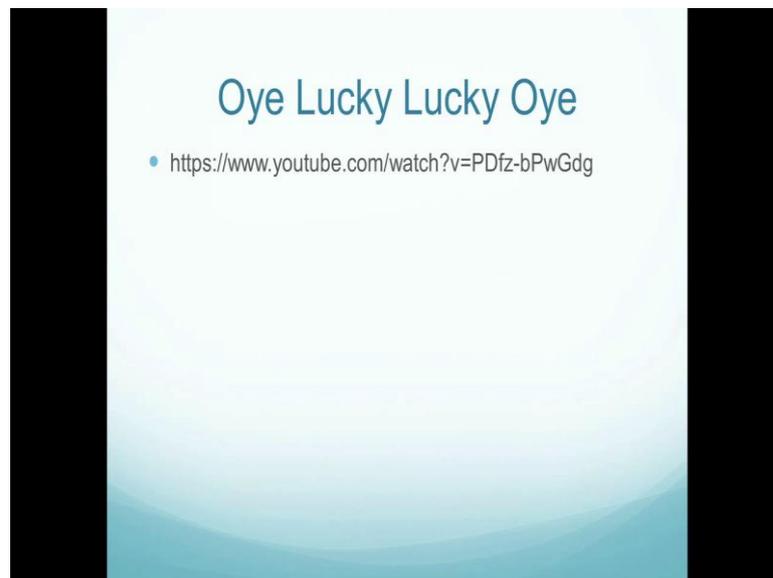
now I am as you know the Mumbai dialect in recent times has never been as well captured as in Munnabhai series. So, expression such as mamu] Jaddu ke jhappi etcetera they went on to become part of national vocabulary our collective lexicon, the sequence to Munnabhai MBBS that is Lage Raho Munnabhai which was released in 2008 popularized terms such as Gandigiri and dimag me chemical locha hai

So, what I attempt to tell you is that the Mumbai Tapori streets slang used in the film has become a sort of style statement, it is amazing that a word Mamu which is a typical Mumbai slang has become popular, you know in the remotest corner of India.

Now, from Bombay we move on to Delhi, Delhi is another metropolitan city with a peculiar brand of languages, the Urdu language though Urdu iced or Urdu laden languages prominent in a Aamir khan Fanna, where the terrorists protagonist, masquerades as poet and a tourist guide before he strikes this is the stark contrast with the language of Dibakar Banerjees Oye Lucky Lucky Oye which is also set on Delhi, where the character has seemed in the local millio of Charles in Delhi and speak of the dialogue peculiar to that domain complete his slang in jargons in both Munnabai and Oye Lucky Lucky Oye the milieu is an integral feature and shares the behavior and attitude of the people. I would like you to watch this particular sequence from Oye Lucky Lucky

Oye in order to appreciate a peculiar dialect of Delhi, I am sure enjoyed the scene.

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Now, from its streets let us talk about land marks of a city and as you know India gate of Delhi is another portent symbol of nationalism and patriotism, it was designed by the British architect Lutyens to commemorate the names of those who died in a first world war. Now, in flash forward to a film like Rang de Basanti. When a group of carefree young people who are in the process of enacting rolls of freedom fighters in a documentary salute to India gate, there is a particular sequence we realize that these people delve deeper into the characters, their reel life gradually takes over, the real life and soon the actor started identified with the patriots.

India gate becomes now a spectator and character in itself and a group of peaceful protesters march towards the war memorial and the brutally beaten by the police this scene demonstrates how past emergence to the present and how temporal boundaries are eroded as state atrocity or innocent citizens are carried out where succession of represent measures. So, strong was the impact of Rang de Basanti on the psyche of Indian masses that post it is release youth activism took to streets to protest and public interest issues and there were a number of cases, where young people got together and started protesting in front of India gate.

Again from Bombay and Delhi let us move on to Hyderabad and Hyderabad Blues Nagesh Kukunoor film is prime example of how city is represented in all it is glory. So, this is one film where the notion of city and the mindscape has been effectively

reinforced the protagonist of *Hyderabad Blues*, which was released in 1998 is Varun, played by Nagesh Kukunoor and the plot revolves around his visit home after 12 years in the USA. It is partly autobiographical and here Nagesh Kukunoor establishes the theme with the emblematic shot at the outside, where the narrative protagonist full of idyllic thoughts of his home town is rudely shaken out of his reveries on a typical crowded Indian road and here sutured in to the narrative as they identify with Varun's gaze surprised absolutely astonished gaze falling upon heard of buffaloes blocking the traffics, so welcome to Hyderabad.

The vitality of *Hyderabad Blues* is marred by the codes it uses, a code as you know is a explain as a sort of system or a structure use to decode a work of art, it is defined as a any system of assumptions believes ideology or stereotype that is relied on or allowed to in a film or other works of art and all this can be call a code. For example, we have the code of the English language, the cultural codes, regulating the behavior of the protagonist, the codes of music, the codes of narrativity and so on since codes and conventions changed according to the ideological climate of the time, it is significant to note the linguistic codes switching in the film clearly reflecting the changing temper of the late nineties. So, it is again this bag drop that you should be watching *Hyderabad Blues*.

Now, gangster cinema and most gangster films are set in Bombay. So, they are very important sub genre of crime films and are particular interest in the context of the urban, because gangster films present as with an alternative topography and alternative community and an alternative urban consciousness. So, there are several films that represent this most importantly and most significantly in recent times again I would like you to watch film such as *Satya* and *Company* and also *Shootout at Lokhandwala*.

Now, we also have a film like Madhur Bhandarkar's *Traffic Signal* set 2006 movie where the traffic signal becomes as emblematic of their lives as the invisible green and red lights that many were mankind from anguish to atonement in the cycle of life which we call existence Bhandarkars micro cosmic view of this street people is cluttered with characters who by creating their own little spaces in the mussel of this street hustle.

Flourishing industry exist at the signals and that is what Madhur Bhandarkar's tells us and those engineer and run the umpiring include gangsters and politicians, the plot is the stationed at a traffic signal, the character shabby to be look at they wear tattered clothes

and the lingo they speak is out right pedestrian uncouth and the uncouth, the director presents an array of the street character such as the orphan little boy tsunami the prostitute, noori, the junky street hustler and illustrates the ironical relationship that grows between passengers in posh cars and these fringe people at streets signals who eke out a living by line to the destiny.

From here we move on to you know down south that is and particularly to Chennai almost perfect example of city cinema is Rajiv Menon's *Kandukondain Kandukondain* which tells this story of modern migrants to post liberalize Chennai and how it represents the interaction and movement between rural and urban sensibility.

The film is the story of two sisters loosely based on Jane Austen's *Sense & Sensibility*, one sister is serious and pragmatic the other romantic and idealistic they are forced to leave their ancestral home in their rural small town and then they move to Chennai and struggle to get by on almost nothing. So, film makers have always shown the two evergreen landmarks of Chennai, the Chennai central station and the LIC Life Insurance Corporation of India building to introduce the city and to show thus that the story has moved from the village or any other city to the bristling metropolis of Chennai or the erstwhile Madras.

The scene reinforces these further in a psyche of most people who are new to the city. So, *Kandukondain Kandukondain* presents some of the stock of images of the so called Singara Chennai or beautiful Chennai from music schools of Mylapore to the IT office on in a Gemini road and Gemini circle and from Benz show room at Anna Salai to Sarvana Bhavan restaurant Chennai all these things are there in *Kandukondain Kandukondain* Chennai of course, in this film is clean, neat and aesthetic representation of utopian dream of urban beauty and success in a post liberalized India.

Shankar's *Boys*, a 2003 movie is yet another exemplar of how post liberalization Indian cinema symbolizes the expressions of the so called generation x boys narrates this story of four young men in collage entries their ambitious, loves and relationships among other things the film is remarkable for its understanding of the anatomy of Chennai, images of bustling Ranganathan street and Mylapore juxtapose with localities of Adyar and Spencer plaza mall of Anna Salai.

So, where does all this lead to we have to understand that India has changed considerably during the last two decades and this shift is reflected in the post liberalization Indian

cinema city in Indian cinema provides a platform for a special negotiation between people of different communities, groups and socio economic backgrounds. The spate of films reflect in the city in it is various manifestation is on the rise as we witness the images of metropolitan films, such as Black and White, Corporate, Cheeni cum, Monsoon Wedding, Page 3, Guru, Delhi 6, Dev D, Yuva, A Wednesday and many more. So, a study of the genre is particular relevant addition to the increasing interest in cultural and film studies.

So, thank you very much we will meet and for our next class soon.